

XL.—Notices of recent Ornithological Publications.

[Continued from p. 403.]

102. *Baker on the Birds of North Cachar.*

[The Birds of North Cachar. A Catalogue of the Passeriformes, Coraciiformes, and the Order Psittaci of the Subclass Ciconiiformes. By E. C. Stuart Baker. Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. viii. p. 162; ix. pp. 1, 111.]

This catalogue contains an account of the numerous field-notes and observations made by Mr. Stuart Baker on the birds of North Cachar, where, as we all know, he has been a diligent collector and observer for many years. The list is arranged on Mr. Oates's system, upon which, however, Mr. Baker makes some critical remarks. North Cachar is a much varied country and has an abundant avifauna. Its ranges of mountains run up to 5000 or 6000 feet, and it has low valleys in plenty. "In the marsh-lands running along the south all kinds of Babblers, Reed-Warblers, &c., have a haunt after their own hearts, and such as require open dry grass country have only to visit Umrang, the hot springs, or similar places. Hungrum and its lofty peaks afford a home for the Tits, rarer Thrushes, and Babblers, which will not descend below 400 feet. Even the Tree-creeper, Wryneck, and many Wrens find this part sufficiently lofty to tempt them to stay and breed; whilst Nuthatches abound in the evergreen-forest in the valleys of the two small streams Laisung and Mahor."

The following species are figured:—*Staphidia castaneiceps*, *Prinia socialis*, *Calliope tschebaiewi*.

103. *Barrett-Hamilton on Sabine's Snipe.*

[Sabine's Snipe, *Gallinago caelestis*, var. *sabini*. By G. E. H. Barrett-Hamilton. Irish Naturalist, iv. p. 12 (1895).]

Out of some 56 examples of this form recorded as having been obtained in the British Islands, 31 are from Ireland, 22 from England, and 3 from Scotland. One (in the collection at the British Museum) is said to have been procured near Paris. Mr. Barrett-Hamilton sketches the distribution of Sabine's

Snipe and discourses on the melanic tendencies observed in Ireland, as exemplified in the dark variety of the common rat and also in many of the Irish Lepidoptera.

104. *Bay on Birds from East Greenland.*

[Hvirveldyr fra den danske Expedition til Grønlands Ostkyst 1891-92. —Særtryk af Meddelelser om Grønland, xix. 1894. Ved Edv. Bay.]

This memoir contains an account of the vertebrates obtained in East Greenland by the Danish Expedition of 1891-92. Examples of 32 species of birds were collected, of which one (*Anser segetum*) was new to Greenland, and five were new to East Greenland. The Passeres met with were four, namely, *Saxicola œnanthe*, *Plectrophenax nivalis*, *Acanthis* (sc. *Linota*) *linaria*, and *Corvus corax*. Full field-notes are given for all the species.

105. *Beddard's 'Zoogeography.'*

[A Text-book of Zoogeography. By Frank E. Beddard, M.A., F.R.S. Cambridge, 1895.]

Mr. Beddard's text-book, which forms one of the biological series of the Cambridge Natural Science Manuals, does not relate specially to ornithology, but contains many references to the facts of distribution of birds. The author, we are pleased to see, adheres closely to the six principal regions deduced by Selater in 1857 from the study of bird-life, though he does not fail to record the divergent views of other writers on the subject. Naturally enough, he draws many of his illustrations from the distribution of earth-worms, of which group he has lately published such a valuable study.

'Zoogeography' contains a large amount of information on the subject treated of, concentrated into a small compass. In such a mass of particulars it is impossible to avoid a certain number of slips. We may point out one or two as regards birds. *Francolinus kirki* is not limited to the island of Zanzibar; on reference to the B. M. Catalogue (xxii. p. 149) it will be seen that it occurs also on the mainland. *Totanus incanus* (p. 10) is not a good instance of a cosmo-

opolitan Wader: its distribution, though wide, is chiefly confined to the Pacific side of the globe. On the other hand, the Turnstone (*Streptilas interpres*) is found on the sea-shores nearly all over the world. *Rhea darwini* (see p. 20) is not restricted to Eastern Patagonia and Argentina, but is now known to extend over the Andes into Northern Chili. Moreover it is almost—if not quite—generically different from *Rhea americana*, whilst *R. macrorhyncha* is little more than a subspecies of the latter and is only found in N.E. Brazil, so that *Rhea* should not be described as “limited to the Chilian Subregion” (as is done at p. 111), but *Pterocnemis* (i. e. *Rhea darwini*) may be quite correctly thus spoken of. “*Parus rosea*” (p. 184) (i. e. *Acredula rosea*), the British form of *Acredula caudata*, is by no means exclusively confined to these islands, but is also found in the Netherlands, the west of Germany, and part of France. It is also, we believe, doubtful whether *Sterna virgata* is restricted to Kerguelen and the Crozets, but Mr. Beddard could not have known that when he wrote.

106. *Butler on the Birds of Indiana.*

[Bibliography of Indiana Ornithology. By A. W. Butler. Proc. Indiana Ac. Sci. 1893, p. 108; and Notes on Indiana Birds, *ibid.* p. 116.]

An extract from the ‘Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science,’ which has reached us, contains two papers on the ornithology of that State by Mr. A. W. Butler. We find a bibliography of Indiana ornithology, containing the titles of all previous authorities on the Birds of Indiana, and a set of notes on Indiana Birds, which is stated to be supplementary to a paper on the same subject published in the ‘Transactions of the Indiana Horticultural Society’ in 1890. Amongst the species now recorded is a single example of the rare *Dendroeca kirtlandi*—the first obtained in this State.

107. *Carr on the Cry of Nyctibius jamaicensis.*

[The “Poor-me-one” (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*, Gm.). By A. B. Carr. Trinidad Field Nat. Club, ii. p. 137, 1894.]

A mysterious nocturnal cry, resembling the words “*poor-*

me-one," is well known in Trinidad, and is commonly attributed to the Little Anteater (*Cyclothurus didactylus*), but Mr. Carr has ascertained that it is really the call of *Nyctibius jamaicensis*.

The "Poor-me-one" calls only from February to June, both months inclusive. It is strictly a nocturnal bird, feeding on night beetles, the large fire-fly being its chief victim. The bird answers readily to a poor imitation of its call, and can be made to follow one at will. It is very unsuspecting, and will not move until one is within a few yards of it. Its prey is caught on the wing, and after each "catch" the bird returns to its perch. Both sexes call, and are alike in plumage.

108. *Chapman (Frank M.) on American Birds.*

[Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America, with Keys to the Species and Description of their Plumage, Nests, and Eggs, their Distribution and Migrations, and a brief Account of their Haunts and Habits, with Introductory Chapters on the Study of Ornithology, how to identify Birds and how to Collect and Preserve Birds, their Nests and Eggs. By Frank M. Chapman. 8vo. New York, 1895.]

To those who dwell on the Eastern slope of the North-American Continent and have a taste for ornithology this handbook will be an instructive and convenient manual. Preparatory chapters on the study of birds, at home and out of doors, and on collecting birds and their nests and eggs, introduce us to a systematic account of the birds of North America east of the 90th meridian. In this will be found the specific characters, range, and mode of nesting of the birds inhabiting this area, arranged according to the nomenclature and classification of the A. O. U. Numerous illustrations are added, both in the text and in plates, taken mostly from photographs.

109. *Clark on the Pterylography of the Caprimulgidæ and Strigidæ.*

[The Pterylography of certain American Goatsuckers and Owls. By Hubert Lyman Clark. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xvii. p. 551.]

Mr. Clark has examined a series of specimens of the different

forms of American Goatsuckers and Owls. These specimens have been "birds in the flesh, either fresh or alcoholic," as the use of skins in such examinations "seems to be of questionable value." We are also pleased to see that Mr. Clark adopts the sensible plan of numbering the primaries from the wrist outwards, as advocated by Wray. Specimens of all the four genera of North American Caprimulgidæ have been carefully studied, and the result is a valuable piece of work, which shows that *Chordeiles* stands apart from the other three genera as regards its pterylosis, as it does in other points of its structure. Good illustrative figures are given of the pterylosis of *Phalænoptilus*, *Antrostomus*, *Nyctidromus*, and *Chordeiles*.

Of the Striges Mr. Clark has examined nine species, belonging to eight genera. There seems to be no doubt that *Micropallas* diverges from the other Owls in having only 10 rectrices. But *Strix*, as already stated by Nitzsch, shows the greatest variation from the normal Owl-type. On the whole the author, after comparing in detail the pterylographical characters of the *Caprimulgi* and *Striges*, comes to the conclusion that these two groups have a "certain degree of affinity," in which we quite agree with him, although Dr. Bowdler Sharpe has recently stated that this idea "is now scouted." We believe, in fact, that the Owls come nearer to the *Caprimulgi* than to the *Accipitres*.

110. *Emerson on the Fauna of the Norfolk Broads.*

[Birds, Beasts, and Fishes of the Norfolk Broadland. By P. H. Emerson, B.A., M.B. (Cantab.). Illustrated with Sixty-eight Photographs by T. A. Cotton. Pp. 396. 8vo. London, 1895. David Nutt.]

Mr. Emerson claims to have passed more than eight years on the Broads, and has made up his mind that the late Mr. Henry Stevenson "did not know intimately the outdoor life of the birds he wrote about from personal observation," besides being of an "inartistic nature." So Mr. Emerson sets him and many others straight; tells us that Bewick's birds—as birds—are all caricatures; speaks of "the monstrous

and gaudy decorations of Selby, Gould, Dresser," and says that the illustrations to Booth's 'Rough Notes' make the student gasp for breath. To improve our corrupt taste he gives us 68 photographs, some from life and some from mounted groups, the best of which—by comparison—have little to do with Broad-life; for instance, the Merlins feeding their young, and the Gannets in the downy stage. In his letterpress he is continually striving to show how much better informed he is than other people, and how he has taken his facts direct from nature; yet his own mistakes are numerous, while his disregard of the laws of syntax appals the reader who is struggling to grasp the author's meaning. That he should include the Swift as one of the four "Swallows" might be expected, but when he states that the *first* to come over is the Swallow, appearing early in April, we would ask when do the Sand-Martins arrive? It is satisfactory to learn that Whinchats are *paired* by the beginning of *June*, because if they delayed much longer it might be bad for the brood! "Parrot-like" is the term he considers appropriate to the beak of the Bullfinch. To conclude, here is a gem of composition:—"The Grey Crow will sit for hours in damp weather, moping like a Wood-Pigeon. Although inaccurate literary hodmen have said they never keep still, any gunner in Norfolk could teach these pseudo-scientists better." Poor restless hodmen!

111. *Field Columbian Museum's first Publication.*

[An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Field Columbian Museum. Vol. I. no. 1. Chicago, U.S.A.: December, 1894.]

If we are correct in what we gather from an examination of the first publication of the "Field Columbian Museum," the objects of this new institution, which was opened on the 2nd June, 1894, are to "commemorate the World's Columbian Exposition, and to create an additional factor in the world's educational equipment." After a report of the proceedings on the day of opening, the present publication gives

historical accounts of the numerous and important collections presented to the Museum through various Departments of the Chicago Exposition. Special reports upon the present state of other departments of the Museum follow, and amongst these is one on the Department of Ornithology, of which, as we have already announced, Mr. Cory is the Curator and Mr. Cherrie the Assistant Curator.

Besides the mounted collection of birds, in which 650 species are represented, including a pair of the extinct Labrador Duck (*Camptolæmus labradorius*), the Department of Ornithology is fortunate in possessing the Cory collection of West-Indian birds, and the excellent ornithological library formerly belonging to the same gentleman. Several good additions have been already received, and the Department has sent a collector to San Domingo, while the Curator himself is at work in Florida.

112. *Hartlaub on Extinct Birds.*

[Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der ausgestorbenen Vögel der Neuzeit sowie derjenigen deren Fortbestehen bedroht erscheint. Von Dr. G. Hartlaub. Abh. naturw. Ver. Bremen, xiv. Heft 1, 1895.]

In this memoir our veteran associate gives us an interesting essay on the most noticeable forms of ornithic life that have recently become extinct, and on others that are in danger of becoming so. After alluding to the principal previous authorities on this subject, Dr. Hartlaub specifies the various agencies that have tended to produce this lamentable result—such as forest-fires, the felling of forests for purposes of cultivation, the introduction of cats, pigs, rats, sparrows, and other animals into foreign lands, and the destruction of millions of beautiful birds to provide ornaments for ladies' hats. But, as Sir Walter Buller has remarked, there are doubtless other agencies tending in the same direction, of which we have at present no information.

Dr. Hartlaub's account of species threatened with extermination gives particulars concerning some 16 members of this unhappy class. As regards the Carolina Parakeet and the Californian Vulture, however, we are not sure that things

are so bad as they are painted. There are even now examples of *Conurus carolinensis* to be seen alive in the Zoological Society's Gardens, and, from what we read in 'The Auk,' it would appear that *Pseudogryphus californianus* is still not so very rare in certain remote districts of the Far West.

The still more melancholy list of birds actually extinct, and not by any possibility to be revived, is a longer one. Nineteen bird-types, many of them of the most remarkable form, have thus passed away for ever, and of some of these (*Nestor norfolcensis*) not even a single specimen is to be found in our museums, whilst others (*Prosobonia leucoptera*) are now known only by single specimens.

113. Harvie-Brown on the Island of Rockall.

[Rockall. By J. A. Harvie-Brown, F.R.S.E., F.Z.S. Proc. R. Phys. Soc. Edinb. xiii. p. 63 (1895).]

It will be remembered that Messrs. Harvie-Brown and T. E. Buckley, in their 'Vertebrate Fauna of the Outer Hebrides,' gave an account of this remote islet, so far as was then known to them. Since the publication of that work their attention has been drawn by Mr. Miller Christy to a description written in 1821 by Surgeon Alexander Fisher, R.N., in his 'Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery to the Arctic Regions in H.M. Ships 'Heckla' and 'Griper' in the years 1819 and 1820'; and this is now printed, with additional information obtained through Mr. John Cordeaux from the Grimsby smackowners and from other sources. The most definite of the slight particulars respecting the birds found on that rock is, however, from Herr H. C. Müller, of the Færoes; from which it appears that Captain Johannes Hansen, of Thorshaven, landed in 1887 and found breeding there *Uria bruennichi*, *Alca torda*, *Fulmarus glacialis*, and *Puffinus major*. Confirmation as regards the last-named species is desirable, for the evidence is at present very strong that the Great Shearwater does not breed anywhere in the northern hemisphere. (See abstract of Capt. Collins's remarks in Saunders's 'Manual of British Birds,' p. 716.)

114. *Headley on the Structure and Life of Birds.*

[The Structure and Life of Birds. By F. W. Headley, M.A., F.Z.S. 8vo. London: Macmillan & Co., 1895.]

Mr. F. W. Headley may be congratulated on having struck the happy mean between excessive aridity and a too superficial treatment of his subject in the volume before us; it is at once sound as to anatomical fact and pleasant reading, a combination which, though happily far from rare nowadays, is still by no means universal. In this book the bird is considered—and not unreasonably—mainly from the point of view of a flying animal; but Mr. Headley does not neglect the other aspects of scientific ornithology. He deals—perhaps a little too briefly—with the evidence of the ancestry and gradual evolution of birds, availing himself here, as elsewhere, of the most recent sources of information; and towards the end is a sketch of the current theories of protective coloration, sexual selection, and instinct, so far as they bear upon the particular group of animals. In his summaries Mr. Headley is judicial, and not urged by any desire to push a favourite theory or theories; while in this book, as in several upon other branches of natural history that have recently appeared, we find a healthy reaction from the irritating “cock-sureness” of a decade since, which argues well for the advance of our science. We know of no book, at any rate of no modern book, which covers precisely the ground of Mr. Headley’s manual; it strengthens a decidedly weak point in ornithological literature, and this fact, coupled with the excellence of the illustrations, should ensure for it a wide circulation.

115. *Herman on Bird-Migration in Hungary.*

[Die Elemente des Vogelzuges in Ungarn bis 1891. Verfasst von Otto Herman. 4to. Budapest, 1895. Zweiter Intern. Orn. Congr. Budapest, 1891.]

Mr. Herman has favoured us with a copy of his dissertation on the migration of birds, which we commend to those amongst us who take an interest in this still somewhat mysterious branch of our subject. After a *résumé* of the

often antagonistic opinions of previous authorities, the observations taken in Hungary at 17 stations are introduced and discussed, particularly as regards the Chimney-Swallow and White Stork. Numerous maps and tables illustrate this excellent piece of work.

116. *Jackson on the Great Frozen Land.*

[The Great Frozen Land. By Frederick George Jackson. Edited from his Journals by Arthur Montefiore. London: Macmillan & Co., 1895.]

As a "preliminary canter" to the Franz-Josef-Land Expedition, Mr. Jackson undertook a winter journey across the tundras of Arctic Russia, from Waigatz Island to Archangel, and thence on to Vadsö. Of this not very comfortable but instructive journey, and of the Samoyeds and their ways, an account is given in the present volume, which has been edited from Mr. Jackson's journals by Mr. Arthur Montefiore. An appendix on the ornithological results of the expedition is added by Mr. J. R. Jeaffreson. On this list of 58 species, for it is little more, a few footnotes only being added, we venture to borrow Mr. Seebohm's remarks recently published in 'Nature' (vol. lii. p. 385):—

"Unfortunately the ornithological part of Mr. Jackson's volume has not fallen into such good hands. There are a dozen or more gross mistakes in the spelling of the names of birds, and in addition there are some curious inconsistencies. In the preliminary observations we are told that Mr. Jackson brought home 'Swans—not Bewick's—but the common variety of that region,' in spite of which the only Swan in the list (No. 28) is Bewick's Swan. Mention is made of Grossbills (does the writer mean Crossbills or Grosbeaks?). Of the Little Stint (No. 45) it is stated that the only authentic eggs were those taken by Middendorff. There is no reason to believe that Middendorff ever found the eggs of the Little Stint. The eggs which he records as being those of *Tringa minuta* were probably those of *Tringa ruficollis*, or possibly those of *Tringa subminuta**. The first identified eggs of

* [On this question, however, see Prof. Newton's letter in 'Nature,' lii. p. 438.—EDD.]

the Little Stint were those taken on July 22nd, 1875, by Mr. Harvie-Brown, on the eastern shores of the lagoon of the Pechora, and a few days later a score had been obtained by the expedition. Other eggs, equally authentic, have since been taken in Lapland, Nova Zembla, and Kolguef. It is extremely unlikely that the identification of the species in the list is always correct. No. 10 doubtless refers to *Phylloscopus tristis*, and not to the Chiffchaff; No. 12 is more likely to be a Redpoll than a Siskin; No. 39 is doubtless *Ægialitis hiaticula*, and not *Æ. curonica*; and No. 53 is more likely to be *Stercorarius richardsoni* than *S. catarractes*. In but few cases is the exact locality given, so that, on the whole, we must condemn the list as worse than useless."

117. *Meyer and Wiglesworth on Birds from North Celebes.*

[Bericht über die von den Herren P. u. F. Sarasin in Nord Célebes gesammelten Vögel. Von A. B. Meyer u. L. W. Wiglesworth. Abh. u. Ber. k. zool. u. anthr. Mus. Dresden, 1894-95, no. 8.]

After their journey to Ceylon the brothers Sarasin* selected Celebes as a new field of work, and proceeded there about two years ago. Two short papers have already been published to describe their newly-discovered species. The authors now give us a complete systematic account of the whole of Messrs. Sarasin's collections from the above island, consisting of 335 bird-skins, referable to 152 species. Altogether Messrs. Sarasin have discovered in Celebes six new species, of which one (*Myza sarasinorum*) belongs to a new genus of Meliphagidæ; and they have, besides, added seven (previously known) species to the avifauna of this island.

118. *North on Birds from the Gilbert Islands.*

[Note on the Occurrence of *Spatula clypeata* and *Urodynamis taitensis* in the Gilbert Group. By A. J. North. Proc. Linn. Soc. N. S. Wales, ser. 2, vol. ix. p. 584, 1895.]

At a recent meeting of the Linnean Society of New South

* See their 'Ergebnisse naturwiss. Forschungen auf Ceylon,' 3 Bde. 1887-93.

Wales, Mr. North exhibited specimens of two birds from the Gilbert Islands (lately annexed by Great Britain) obtained by the British Resident, Mr. Swayne. One of these was the Common Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*), which occasionally straggles thus far. The other was a nomadic Cuckoo (*Urody-namis taitensis*), said to be the only land-bird found in the Gilbert group, where, however, it does not breed.

119. *Richmond on a new Genus of Trogons.*

[Diagnosis of a new Genus of Trogons (*Heterotrogon*), based on *Hapaloderma vittatum* of Shelley; with a Description of the Female of that Species. By Charles W. Richmond. Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. xvii. p. 601.]

Mr. Richmond has examined a series of specimens of the rare Trogon (*Hapaloderma vittatum*, Shelley) obtained by Dr. Abbott on Mount Kilimanjaro, and has come to the conclusion that this species should be generically separated from *Hapaloderma narina*. He proposes the name *Heterotrogon* for the genus, and gives full descriptions of both sexes.

120. *Seebohm on the Classification of Birds.*

[Classification of Birds; an attempt to Diagnose the Subclasses, Orders, Suborders, and Families of existing Birds. Supplement. By Henry Seebohm. London: Porter, 1895.]

Mr. Seebohm has presented us with a "Supplement" to his essay on the 'Classification of Birds,' published in 1890 (see *Ibis*, 1890, p. 379). Since that date, in addition to original research, he has had an opportunity of studying what Fürbringer, Lydekker, Gadow and others have written upon this subject. The result has led him to see the necessity of certain corrections and modifications in his original views, which are put before us in the present pamphlet.

Mr. Seebohm now divides existing birds into five "Subclasses": Sphæniscomorphæ, Pelargomorphæ, Coraciomorphæ, Ægithomorphæ, and Dromæomorphæ. These subclasses are divided into 31 suborders, the limits of which, as a general rule, agree very fairly with what are nowadays considered by most systematists as the leading primary divisions of the whole

class. Mr. Seebohm gives us a mass of information as to many important details of structure met with in the various orders and suborders which cannot fail to be very useful to ornithologists.

121. *Shufeldt on Isolated Species of Birds.*

[Some of the "Outliers" among Birds. By R. W. Shufeldt. Popular Science Monthly, xlvi. p. 760. New York, 1895.]

This is an interesting magazine-article, in which the author treats of such species as *Opisthocomus cristatus*, *Psophia leucoptera*, *Eurypyga helias*, *Rhinochetus jubatus*, *Dicholophus cristatus*, *Gypoggeranus serpentarius*, *Scops umbretta*, *Palamedeia cornuta*, *Heteralocha acutirostris*, *Menura superba*, and others; those above specified being illustrated by cuts, many of them taken—with due acknowledgment—from Professor Newton's 'Dictionary of Birds.'

122. *Smith (Rev. A. C.) on the late John Legg.*

[Memoir of Mr. John Legg, of Market Lavington, Wilts: an advanced Ornithologist of the 18th Century. By the Rev. A. C. Smith. Wiltshire Archæol. & Nat. Hist. Mag. xxviii. p. 5.]

The subject of this memoir was a little-known writer on ornithology between 1779 and 1788, and his views on the migration of birds appear to have been considerably in advance of his time.

123. *Stone on the Birds of the Delaware Valley.*

[On the Birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, with Introductory Chapters on Geographical Distribution and Migration, prepared under the direction of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club. By Witmer Stone. Pp. 185. 8vo. Philadelphia, 1894.]

The great city of Philadelphia lies in the centre of the Delaware valley, and it is fit that the numerous ornithologists of that important district should have a handbook of their own, containing a summary of the distribution and occurrence of the birds that are found in the country. Mr. Witmer

Stone appears to have well performed his task, as will be seen by the volume now before us, which is principally occupied by an annotated list of the birds of Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The species recognized as occurring within these limits are 352 in number. A complete bibliography and illustrative maps are added.

124. *Suchetet on the Bimaculated Duck.*

[Histoire du Bimaculated Duck de Pennant, confondu longtemps avec l'*Anas glocitans* de Pallas; et Notes sur plusieurs autres oiseaux du même genre. Par André Suchetet. Pp. 48. 8vo. Lille, 1894.]

The author, who is already well known for his writings on hybrids, especially among the Anatidæ, devotes 14 pages to exposing the errors committed by Pennant and his successors—a terrible list—who identified the “Bimaculated Duck” with *Anas glocitans*, Pallas. He goes on to consider the existing specimens of this Duck, and concludes that the weight of evidence is in favour of the birds being hybrids between the Mallard and the Teal; after which other hybrid Ducks are discussed. Two coloured plates by Keulemans are given: the first representing Degland’s bird in the Douai Museum, supposed to be a cross between *Anas boscas* and *Querquedula crecca*; the second, an apparent hybrid between *A. boscas* and *Chaulelasmus streperus*, in the collection of Mr. E. Hart, of Christchurch, Hants.

125. *Thurston on Rámésvaram Island.*

[Rámésvaram Island and Fauna of the Gulf of Manaar. Second edition, revised, with Additions. By Edgar Thurston, C.M.Z.S., &c. Bull. Madras Govern. Mus. no. 3, 1895.]

Mr. Edgar Thurston, Superintendent of the Madras Government Museum, has kindly sent us a copy of the second edition of his excellent account of Rámésvaram Island, on the line of Adam’s Bridge, between India and Ceylon. Marine animals are, of course, its principal product, and it would seem to be a perfect spot for such a marine biological station as has been talked of in India. But Mr. Thurston procured there a certain number of birds, of which he gives

us a list (*op. cit.* p. 88). The greater number of these are land-birds.

126. *Trouessart on Zoological Geography.*

[La Géographie Zoologique, par le Dr. E. L. Trouessart. Paris, 1890.]

Dr. Trouessart has kindly sent us a copy of his 'Géographie Zoologique,' which, although published several years ago, had escaped our attention. Like Mr. Beddard's volume above noticed, it is a useful compendium, with much valuable information condensed into a small compass. Dr. Trouessart, we are glad to see, adheres mainly to the six great Regions of Selater and Wallace, though he wishes to add two to their number—an Arctic and an Antarctic Region*. Of these we need only say that they are in our opinion "quantités négligeables," though there is more ground for the recognition of the latter than for that of the former. We will venture to add a few remarks on what we deem to be slight inaccuracies in the portions of Dr. Trouessart's manual which relate to birds.

The Penguin of the Galápagos (*op. cit.* p. 43) is *Spheniscus mendiculus*, not "*mendicatus*," and the Penguin of the Cape (*Spheniscus demersus*) is quite different from that of the Falkland Islands (*S. magellanicus*). See "Birds" of the 'Challenger' Expedition, p. 125, pls. xxvii. & xxviii.

The Lesser Sheath-bill (*Chionis minor*) differs from its congener (*C. alba*) not only in size (*cf. op. cit.* p. 45), but in its black bill and other particulars. There are at present examples of both the species living in the Zoological Society's Gardens. On the west coast of North America at least (contrary to what our author says, p. 264), Humming-birds go far north of 40° N. lat., *Selasphorus rufus* being a regular summer visitor at Sitka (57° 3' N. lat.). In the east of

* The six Regions of Selater are stated (p. 13) to have been founded in 1835 in a 'Treatise on the Geography and Classification of Animals in Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopaedia.' This is altogether a mistake. They were founded in June 1857, in a paper read before the Linnean Society of London, entitled "On the General Geographical Distribution of the Members of the Class Aves." See Journ. Linn. Soc. vol. ii. p. 130.

N. America also *Trochilus colubris* far passes the limit here assigned to the group.

We may also remark that it is not quite correct to say that there are no fishes in the "Arctic" Region. Col. H. W. Feilden found examples of a species of charr (*Salmo*) in a lake near the winter-quarters (1875-76) of H.M.S. 'Alert' in 82° 27' N. lat. (See P. Z. S. 1877, p. 294.)

127. Verrill on Birds from the Antarctic Islands.

[On some Birds and Eggs collected by Mr. Geo. Comer at Gough Island, Kerguelen Island, and the Island of South Georgia, with Extracts from his Notes, including a Meteorological Record for about Six Months at Gough Island. By G. E. Verrill. Trans. Conn. Ac. ix. p. 430, 1895.]

Mr. Verrill describes the collections made by Mr. G. Comer during two voyages to the southern hemisphere for sealing purposes. From South Georgia Mr. Comer brought home two skins of an Albatross and eggs of eight species of birds, from Kerguelen and Gough Islands 23 bird-skins of 14 species, and about 350 eggs of 13 species, besides some skeletons. He also made very full field-notes.

The species referred to and commented upon by Mr. Verrill in the present paper are 20 in number. Amongst these the most remarkable are—*Porphyriornis comeri*, a new flightless Gallinule, discovered by Mr. Comer, and already described by Mr. Allen (see Ibis, 1893, p. 125); and *Thalassogeron eximius*, sp. n., a supposed new Albatross from Gough Island, on which we should like to have Mr. Salvin's opinion. It is nearest to *T. chlorhynchus*. Altogether Mr. Comer found 15 species of birds on Gough Island, two being so-called "Sparrows," of which unfortunately no specimens were preserved. In South Georgia Mr. Comer met with 17 species. Mr. Verrill does not appear to have known of Pagenstecher's paper on the birds of this island, published in 1885 (see Ibis, 1885, p. 319). Extracts from Mr. Comer's journals are added, and on two uncoloured plates are given figures of *Thalassogeron eximius* and of two species of Penguin.

128. *Verrill on the Birds of Dominica.*

[Notes on the Fauna of the Island of Dominica, British West Indies; with Lists of the Species obtained and observed by G. E. and A. H. Verrill. By G. E. Verrill. Trans. Conn. Ac. viii. p. 315, 1892.]

Messrs. G. E. and A. H. Verrill visited Dominica in March, April, and May, 1890, and made the collection of birds, of which an account is given in the present memoir, at four different stations on the island. The specimens have been identified by Mr. Allen. The species, 54 in all, are arranged and named according to the system of the A. O. U. Good field-notes are appended. Mr. Verrill adds a complete list of the birds of Dominica, inserting in their proper places the species of which specimens had been obtained by previous authorities. This raises the total number of Dominican birds to 64, of which the two fine Parrots *Chrysotis augusta* and *C. bouqueti*, and some five or six Passeres, are peculiar to the island.

129. *Waugh and Lataste on Chilean Birds.*

[Une Semaine de Chasse, au mois de juin, dans la hacienda de San Alfonso (département de Quillota). Par Enrique Waugh et Fernando Lataste. Procès-Verb. Soc. Sci. du Chili, 1894, p. clxvii.]

The authors give a list, with field-notes, of a collection of birds made during a week's stay at the hacienda of San Alfonso, in the department of Quillota, Chili, where specimens of 48 species were obtained or observed. *Turdus fuscater*, we should say, as we have remarked on a previous occasion (above, p. 164), must be a mistake for *Turdus magellanicus*.

130. *Winge on Birds observed at the Danish Light-stations in 1894.*

[Fuglene ved de danske Fyr i 1894. 12te Aarsberetning om danske Fugle. Ved Herluf Winge. Vidensk. Medd. naturh. Foren. i Kjøbenhavn, 1895, p. 1.]

This is M. Winge's usual report on the birds observed at the Danish Light-stations, arranged as in the preceding

reports (*cf.* Ibis, 1894, p. 164). Notes are given on 66 species, and on the exact dates and places of their occurrences. Further notes are added in conclusion: amongst which are remarks upon the remains of Pelicans in the Kitchen-middens, and on the supposed recent occurrence of this bird in Denmark (*cf.* Ibis, 1894, p. 348, and 1895, p. 294); also on birds lately received from the Faroes and from Greenland.

XLI.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "to the Editors":—

SIRS,—Last year the Palestine Redstart (*Ruticilla semirufa*) was, as usual, abundant around our mountain-camp in the Lebanon. The males sang freely, and I was impressed afresh with the curious rustling sound they make at the end of the song proper, just as if the birds were scraping backwards and forwards with their bills among dry leaves. I have a strong impression of having read somewhere that the Common Redstart (*R. phænicura*) utters a similar sound in connection with its song; but none of the books to which I have access at present make any mention of it, and *R. phænicura* does not sing during its visits to us. No doubt some of your readers can tell me what the facts are in reference to the latter species.

If this sound—apparently useless—be common to both species, that would argue either some unknown and somewhat important function, or else it would show how tenaciously a character may be perpetuated by heredity in the absence of selection. Could such an unmusical finale to an otherwise melodious performance have a function analogous to what Dr. Wallace calls "recognition marks"? I mean, as evidence to the female that her suitor was, so to speak, of her own station in life. It is not often that I see *R. semirufa* and *R. phænicura* in the same place and side by side; but their